



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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KING MACKEREL COMMERCIAL FISHERY CLOSED IN NORTHERN FLORIDA WEST COAST SUBZONE

The commercial fishery for Gulf group king mackerel in the northern Florida west coast subzone is closed, effective 12:00 noon, November 13, 2003, through June 30, 2004. NOAA Fisheries has determined that the commercial quota for the 2003/2004 fishing year of 168,750 pounds of king mackerel for this segment of the commercial fishery has been reached. This action closes the king mackerel commercial fishery in the Gulf of Mexico from the Alabama/Florida state boundary to the Lee/Collier County, Florida boundary (see reverse). Along with the previous closure of the western zone (September 24, 2003), the commercial fishery for Gulf group king mackerel is now closed from the U.S./Mexico border to the Lee/Collier County, Florida boundary until July 1, 2004.

During the closure period, no person aboard a vessel for which a commercial permit for king mackerel has been issued may fish for Gulf group king mackerel in federal waters in the closed zone or subzone, except for a person aboard a charter vessel or headboat. A person aboard a vessel that has a valid charter vessel/headboat permit for coastal migratory pelagic fish may continue to retain king mackerel in or from the closed zone/subzone under the 2-fish daily bag limit, provided the vessel is operating as a charter vessel or headboat. Charter vessels or headboats that hold a commercial king mackerel permit are considered to be operating as a charter vessel or headboat when they carry a passenger who pays a fee or when more than three persons are aboard, including operator and crew.

During the closure, no king mackerel caught in the closed zone/subzone may be purchased, bartered, traded, or sold. This prohibition of sale does not apply to trade in king mackerel that were harvested, landed ashore and bartered, traded, or sold before the

closure and held in cold storage by a dealer or processor.

Closure of this commercial king mackerel fishery complies with regulations implemented under the Fishery Management Plan for Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources of the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic (FMP) and is necessary to protect the Gulf group king mackerel resource. Quotas and closure provisions for mackerel fisheries were developed in the FMP jointly by the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils. In compliance with the FMP, an annual commercial quota of 3.26 million pounds was established for Gulf group king mackerel. This quota was divided into commercial quotas of 1.01 million pounds for the western zone and 2.25 million pounds for the eastern zone off Florida. The northern Florida west coast subzone quota was derived from the eastern zone quota. Regulations implemented under the FMP require closure of any segment of the commercial fishery when its quota is reached or is projected to be reached.

To report violations of commercial trip limits or closures, contact National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) Law Enforcement Division at 727/570-5344 or 1-800/853-1964. NOAA Fisheries, is an agency of the Commerce Department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Additional information on southeastern fisheries may be found on the Web sites of the Gulf of Mexico (<http://www.gulfcouncil.org>) or South Atlantic (<http://www.safmc.nmfs.gov>) Fishery Management Council; they may be contacted by e-mail at gulf.council@noaa.gov, or safmc@noaa.gov respectively.

GULF GROUP KING MACKEREL: FLORIDA WEST COAST SEASONAL BOUNDARIES

See page for maps of boundaries.

GULF GROUP KING MACKEREL: STATUS OF QUOTAS AND DAILY TRIP/LANDING LIMITS FOR COMMERCIAL FISHERIES FOR THE 2003/2004 FISHING YEAR

ZONE/SUBZONE	QUOTA (POUNDS, lb)	DAILY VESSEL TRIP LIMITS	DURATION OF TRIP LIMITS			STATUS	
						BEGINNING	CURRENT
EASTERN ZONE (Florida)	2,250,000						
East Coast Subzone ¹	1,040,625	50 Fish 50/75 Fish ²	Nov 1, 2003	until Feb 1, 2004	780,469 lb 1,040,625 lb	Opened: Nov 1, 2003	Open: 50 fish/day
West Coast Subzones	1,209,375						
<u>Northern</u>							
Hook and Line	168,750	1,250 lb 500 lb	Jul 1, 2003 Oct 30, 2003	until until	126,563 lb 168,750 lb	Opened: Jul 1, 2003	Closed: Nov 13, 2003
<u>Southern</u>							
Hook and Line	520,312	1,250 lb 500 lb	Jul 1, 2003 390,234 lb	until until	390,234 lb 520,312 lb	Opened: Jul 1, 2003	Open: 1250 lb/day
Gillnet	520,312	0 lb 25,000 lb	Feb 4, 2003 Jan 20, 2003	until until	Jan 20, 2004 520,312 lb	Opens: Jan 20, 2004 ³	Closed: Feb 4, 2003
WESTERN ZONE (Texas - Alabama)	1,010,00	3,000 lb 0 lb	Jul 1, 2003 Sep 24, 2003	until until	1,010,000 lb Jul 1, 2004	Opened: Jul 1, 2003	Closed: Sep 24, 2003
Hook and Line							

¹ The Florida east coast subzone, located between the Flagler/Volusia and Miami-Dade/Monroe County boundaries, exists only from November 1 through March 31, when the Gulf migratory group of king mackerel extends into that area. From April 1 through October 31, king mackerel landed in that area belong to the Atlantic migratory group.

² Trip limit would increase from 50 to 75 fish/day on February 1, 2004, if less than 75 percent or 780,469 pounds of the Florida east coast subzone quota is harvested prior to February 1, 2004.

³ Fishery is closed until 6:00 a.m., January 20, 2004.